בימים ההמה אשר יחזיקו עשרה
dh ' jwj y
חרותינו
Ḥerûṯênû, Our LIBERATION
Issue Six, October /November 2006

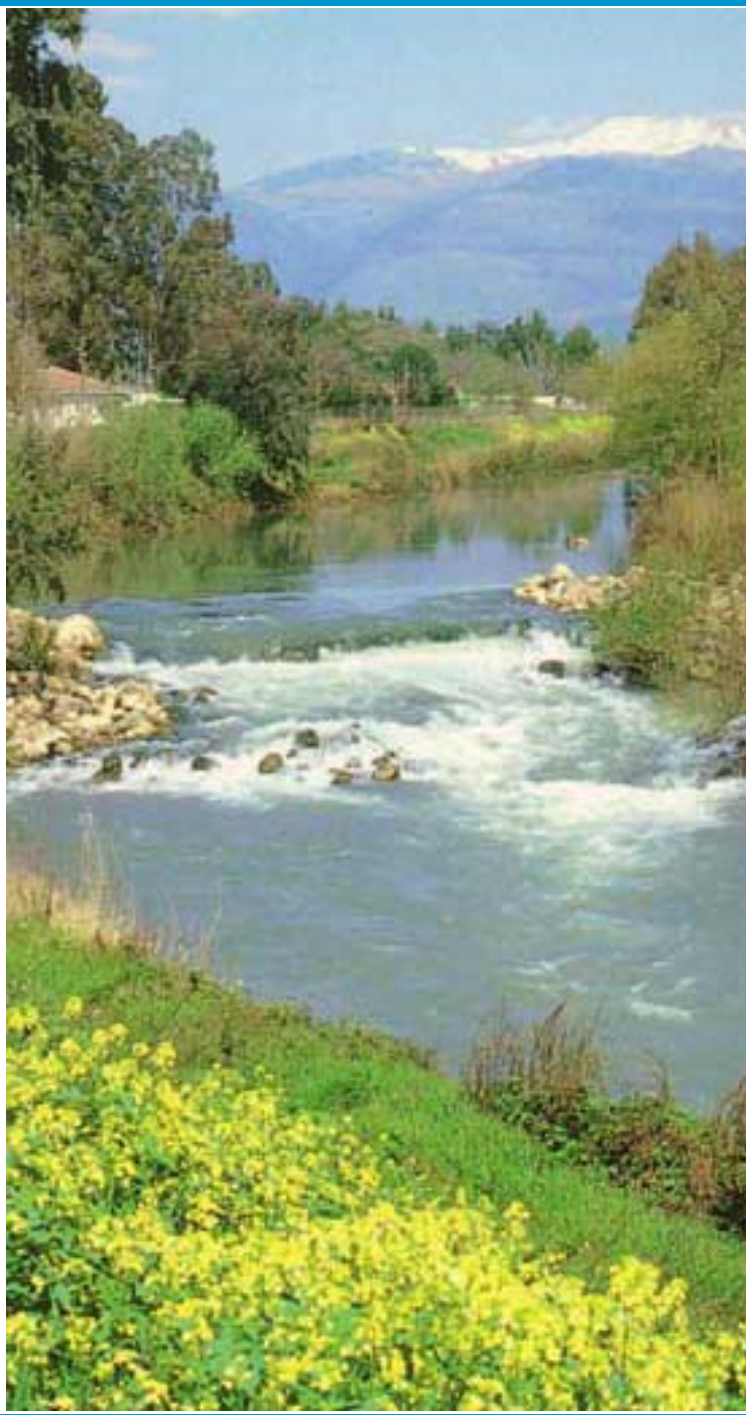
The High Days are here!

In a time of the year when many people around the world think of dying Fall and impending dead of Winter, Jews look forward to the yearly death of our sins and rebirth to do God's will. Yom Teru`ah (commonly called Rosh Hashana) is the signal which alerts us to repent. Yom Hakippurim (Day of Purgations) is when we as a people approach God and confess our shortcomings as a people, and through repentance and confession we receive forgiveness. Afterwards comes the celebration of Sukkot ("Tabernacles" in the old English translations) when we declare that it is only God Who provides for us in His world, feasting and living (at least eating) in temporary shelters like the Children of Israel in the wilderness.

We, of course, can reconcile and receive forgiveness any time in any moment by confessing and repenting of sins, doing Torah and justice to those who need it, fighting oppression and evil. But at this time of the year, we unite with all Jews to make this process clear as a part of the heritage YHWH has established for His People.

שמידה

Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? -Amos 5:22-25



(Picture: Jordan River. Hebrew *Yarden* means "Descender")

The Ebionite Manifesto

The Ebionite Community is the living continuation of the Jewish religious movement of Jesus. Christianity is the religion of Paul and others, and not part of the biblical faith and revelation of the God of Israel nor is it of Jesus.

We declare the man Paul of Tarsus, the false teacher against the mark of Covenant and God's Torah, to be outside of the Way taught by Yeshua, the anointed, son of Miryam and Yosef.

Let his name, Paul, be accursed as he called God's Torah a curse. Let the afflictions he incited the gentiles to heap upon God's name and upon His People strike such great shame upon the gentiles that decent people among them will seek God in repentance from the man of Tarsus' Great Sin. Let the frontlets of their eyes and arm be bound with God's Torah and resist the mark of lawlessness.

We call upon the gentiles to repent, to abandon paganism and the perverse testament, and enter into true covenant through Torah, circumcision, and immersion in order to submit and prepare for the Reign of God as people exhibiting good works.

Your teachers, popes, ministers, priests, and leaders lead you to the outer darkness. They lie to you, rob you, abuse you, and use you to do likewise to others as they consume the whole world. They are idolaters who feed at Mammon's breast and have built the empire of Edom for two thousand years.

We expose your "apostle" as false; your "testament" as false; your society as false; your church, its rulers, your governments as false. Our allegiance and hope is to the God of Israel alone.

Yahwism, the faith of the Written Torah given by the One God, is a revolutionary system of life with justice that can supersede all other systems of government and ideologies. The Evyonim are Yahwists above all else. It allows for One Ruler, the God of Israel alone, with none beside Him. God is not man, and no man is divine. No man can make you right with God except yourself, and only you can atone for your sins through repentance and reparation to Him and your fellow man. You will never find God, Yahweh King of the Universe, world within worlds, worlds without end, in a church or shrine, kneeling before statues, sticks, stones, or men. Tear down your church and masjid. Take the wood and stones and build houses for the poor; take the sticks for firewood; sell the treasure and idols to buy food and heal the sick; bring all men in love to bend the knee to the God of Israel. **Yahweh Alone**.

חרותינו *Our Liberation* is a publication of the Ebionite Community. Original content copyrighted by the Ebionite Community, all rights reserved. Articles may be photocopied only by written permission from Shemayah Phillips, Paqid, Ebionite Community, to be freely distributed (leave it in a public place!); no one may sell copies or printouts. Subscriptions: PO Box 546, Huntsville, TN. 37756, USA. Subscriptions to חרותינו *Our Liberation* are bi-monthly in PDF (Adobe Acrobat) format.
Email us at liberationsubs2@ebionite.org or visit http://ebionite.org/ourliberation.htm for price information.

Calendar lû^{a}ḥ לוח

October /November 2006

Readings for Shabbat, October and November 2006

Week	Parasha	Haftara	Tehillim
September 10 –16	**Nitzavim: Deu 29:9-30:20**	**Isa 61:10-63:9**	**140-143**
	Wayyelekh: Deu 31:1-30	**Isa 55:6-56:8**	**144-146**
September 24 –30	**Ha`azinu: Deu 32:1-30**	**2 Sam 22:1-51**	**147-150**
October 15-21	**Breishiyt: Gen. 1.1-6.8**	**Isaiah 42.5-43.10 (S'fardi ritual: Isaiah 42.5-21)**	**1-4**
October 22-28	**Noakh: Gen. 6.9-11.32**	**Isaiah 54.1-55.5 (S'fardi ritual: Isaiah 54.1-10)**	**5-8**
October 29-November 4	**Lekh-Lekha: Gen. 12.1-17.27**	**Isaiah 40.27-41.16**	**9-10**
November 5-11	**Wayera: Gen. 18.1-22.24**	**II Kings 4.1-37 (S'fardi ritual: II Kings 4.1-23)**	**11-12**
November 12-18	**Ḥayey Sarah: Gen. 23.1-25.18**	**I Kings 1.1-31**	**13-15**
November 19-25	**Toldot: Gen. 25.19-28.9**	**Malachi 1.1-2.7**	**16-18**
November 26-December 2	**Wayetze: Gen. 28.10-32.3**	**Hosea 12.13-14.10 (Optional addition: Micah 7.18) (S'fardi ritual: Hosea 11.7-12.12)**	**19-22**

Look for the New Moon (Rosh Ḥodesh) Days

Expected From Jerusalem
Tuesday evening, October 24, 2006
Wednesday, November 22, 2006

New Moon Reading: Genesis 1:14-18; Psalm 104; Psalm 89

Special Days*

Yom Teru`ah (Trumpets/"Rosh Hashana") evening of Friday, September 22 through Sunday.
Yom Hakippurim (Day of Purgations, "Atonement") evening of Sunday, October 1 through Monday, October 2.
Sukkot ("Tabernacles" "Shelters") evening of Friday, October 6 through Friday 13.

*Note: Please see this issue's article, "The Holy Days and Jewish Unity."

The Holy Days and Jewish Unity

An important decision has been made to join the majority of Jews to celebrate the holy days according to the rabbinic calendar.

The Ebionites are not rabbinic. We have our own customs and approaches to Yahwistic life. But we must also recognize that there are areas of religion which are public in nature as well as private and individual. We have different customs within our own worship as a group from other branches of Yahwism. But Yahwistic peoples are a distinct minority in the world, and sometimes we should stand together. We have come to feel that one of these matters which should bring us together are the days for the observance of the holy days commanded by God.

This is new beginning with the High Holy Days of the seventh month now approaching. For years we waited for news of the visible crescent, the first sliver of light of the new moon, from people in Israel. Then we would count out the days to a holy day and celebrate at that time, whether the vast majority of Jews were celebrating the same day or not. We do believe that the day of the visible crescent is most likely the accurate beginning of the biblical lunar month. In fact, there is at least one group of rabbinic Jews in Israel who, like the Israeli New Moon Society (http://www.geocities.com/royh_il/), is trying to provide a new Sanhedrin (a high council of rabbinic teachers) with information needed to return to visible crescents as a basis of the calendar. And we look forward to the calendar based on observation used before the Destruction of the Temple. Such a development should go hand in hand with the reestablishment of the Temple ministry.

But until that happens we have most Jews who are following a calculated calendar based

predominantly on a new moon conjunction (which cannot be seen with the naked eye). We have calendars based on these calculations and the dates of holy days are often reflected on secular, gentile calendars in the West. So millions of people are aware of this present type of Jewish calendar.

The rabbinic calendar is very accurate astronomically in many ways, though not perfect. Considering the actual changing of the earth's revolutions (it is slowing) and also the moon, the month cannot be entirely fixed. The calendar and the mathematical aspects involved cannot be discussed here, and certainly not for anyone who is not an expert. However, we are not adopting the current rabbinic method because of any belief in its perfection or superiority to a visible crescent calendar.

We admit that we are settling for this rabbinic calendar in setting dates for the observance of holy days in order to join the general body of Jews throughout the world in unity and celebration. It is a decision of expediency.

While the 'Evyonim may have differences in styles of worship, liturgy, dress and interpretation with other Yahwistic peoples, and even individual Ebionites may have differences in personal expression of faith, publicly in observance of holy days we want to support a united front rather than quibble and splinter in plain view of gentiles (with their negative stance towards Jews).

On the practical side of the issue, it can be hard enough for a Yahwist to get time off from work when the general population has little respect for or knowledge of biblical faith. Christians and others feel threatened by the holy days of biblical religion as a clear message of rejection of gentile religion. Most employers (and even schools) do not like anything that doesn't run according to their own schedule. Others just dislike expressions of religion since most government sanctioned holidays (usually based on Christian holidays) have become so secular that to consider them religious is an affront to modern people. Others just cannot deal with any type of non-conformity. So it is hard enough for a Jew to observe the holy days in a gentile world without keeping the same holy days at a different time.

Most gentile employers who look at a calendar will see major Jewish holy days listed. There may be some profit for them to not be seen as a Jew-hater and they gladly or begrudgingly allow time off. It's bad enough that such matters could end in termination of employment or a lawsuit. You should not explain your observances to them because it rarely does any good, and they rarely care. Just do your duty.

But for these employers to be asked to not only acknowledge "Jewish holidays" ("your days" as we so often hear them described), but to understand and approve time off for a Passover or Yom Hakippurim a few days later than their calendar shows is too far over their heads. Mention the crescent of the moon and prepare for some negative responses, even ridicule. Wander off from the main herd of Judaism and be picked off by the dogs.

Many 'Evyonim have had a traumatic journey from conformity and relative safety in gentile society. To take them out of one herd to leave them straggling on the fringe of another is too much to ask. While 'Evyonim may indeed look different or act different inside the herd, we want to be seen as a strong united body to our enemies.

With such concerns in mind, we have decided to follow our rabbinic brothers by compromising our calendar beliefs to observe theirs until they also return to a visible new moon calendar. We will continue to watch for and have special

[23]YHWH spoke to Moshe and said:[24]Speak to the Israelites and say: "The first day of the seventh month will be a day of rest for you, of remembrance and acclamation, a sacred assembly.[25]You will do no heavy work and you will offer a burnt offering for YHWH." (Wayiqra' 23)

Now when the seventh month came round—the Israelites being in their towns—[1]all the people gathered as one man in the square in front of the Water Gate, and asked the scribe Ezra to bring the Book of the Torah to Moshe which YHWH had prescribed for Israel.[2]Accordingly, on the first day of the seventh month, the kohen Ezra brought the Torah before the assembly, consisting of men, women and all those old enough to understand. [3]In the square in front of the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and of those old enough to understand, he read from the book from dawn till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Torah…. [9]Then His Excellency Nekhemyah and the kohen and scribe Ezra and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all the people, 'Today is sacred to YHWH your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.' For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Torah.[10]He then said, "You may go; eat what is rich, drink what is sweet and send a helping to the man who has nothing prepared. For today is sacred to our Sovereign. Do not be sad: the joy of YHWH is your stronghold." (Nekhemyah 8)

[1]Sing out loud to God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Ya`aqov. [2] Take a psalm, and get the hand drum, the pleasant harp with the stringed instrument. [3] Blow the shofar loud on the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. [4] For this *is* a statute for Israel, *and* a decision of the God of Ya`aqov. [5] This He decreed for Yosef *as* a witness, when he went out of the land of Egypt: *where* I heard a language *that* I did not understood. [6] I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots. [7] You called in trouble, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder: I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. (Tehillim 81)

The day of Yom Teru`ah has often been described as Rosh Hashana (the head of the year), and in older Bible translations may be called the Feast of Trumpets. We know that the beginning of the religious year is in the Spring (in the northern hemisphere), or Aviv /Nisan when Passover is celebrated, and so Ebionites do not consider it a "new year." The actual year according to the Jewish or Christian system's criteria is not really known and thus only a convention. According to the rabbinic perspective the year 5767 will begin on September 23rd.

Yom Teru`ah is a day of loud blasts from the ram's horn trumpet. It may seem primitive to blow a hollowed out horn from a sheep or antelope, but its underlying psychology is timeless, and the ancient tribal sounds of the shofar effective. Not many translations are successful in bringing the mood of the day out in its role of signaling the "days of awe" preceding Yom Hakippurim when we fast and "afflict our souls" because of sins against Yahweh and His creatures, and we reconcile ourselves to Him in complete repentance. This is why "*zikron teru`ah*" ("memorial sounding of alarm") is used: the verse calls us to bring to mind our transgressions and is also a warning that Yahweh will not hold back judgment of the unrepentant forever. We must listen to the call for us to separate from the unrepentant and join in constructive action towards better observing the Covenant. While we repent every day in acknowledgement of sins, we remember communally and individually that there is a time when all are to account for sins.

Instead of the signal of judgment day found in rabbinic and some Yeshuine writings (example, Revelation) whether to be judged for the coming year or a final judgment, we see it as the beginning of ten days of directed self-judgment and repentance before we present ourselves spiritually before God on *Yom Hakippurim* (Day of Purgation). Yet the cumulative failure for mankind to seek God in repentance will indeed cause dire judgment as we destroy the earth and each other in our ignorance of God and His Torah commandments. These ten days have been called the *Yamim Nora'im* (Days of Awe, or Fear). They should be days of repairing our lives, our souls, and reconciliation with others toward repairing the world. One might recall the words attributed to Yeshua bar-Yosef who suggested we go and reconcile with our brothers before appearing before God's altar (i.e., on *Yom Hakippurim*).

As we look inward we will surely see many defects. On Yom Teru`ah day we **read the Torah** to rediscover our shortcomings and take a spiritual inventory for the remaining days before the fast of *Yom Hakippurim*. This is why the returnees in Nekhemya's days wept as the Torah was read. They saw how far God's way had been neglected in their lives and among His people. But then they celebrated with rich food and drink. Why? Because YHWH will accept confession and repentance.

We are not perfect, but *can be forgiven*. There is a popular bumper sticker hereabouts, "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven!" This is the absolute opposite of the spirit of repentance. It conveys a haughty and ignorant insult that "certain" people can sin at will, without repercussions. True Yahwism is evidenced by a constant remembrance of our short-comings, and constant desire to reconcile with those and the One we have sinned against. Yom Teru`ah reminds us as a nation, each part of our people individually and corporately. Yahweh *always* will forgive us when we turn to Him with true repentance. If we will return to justice our sins will be white as snow (Is 1: 16-18). This is the perpetual promise that we must surely celebrate. The day is not of judgment in the doomsday scenario, but the day of invitation in which we are called back to God and Torah with all the benefits and opportunities extended especially to our people!

Yeshua bar-Yosef summarizes the spirituality of forgiveness which God shows for us and we must show also.

> Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often

should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him [one huge amount] was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred [days' wages]; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart." (Mt. 18:21-35)

Yeshua, the Jew, expresses the true Jewish perspective of our (Israel's) place before God and toward our fellow Yahwist. As participants in Covenant with God, Israel has sinned often and is deserving of the consequences of transgressing it. Yet if we throw ourselves at God's mercy and say, 'be patient with me—I will repent', He forgives us fully. But we too must imitate God's compassion toward others sincerely as well in order to expect forgiveness.

We Ebionites do not just eat sweet foods like cakes, fruit dipped in honey, and many others to start a sweet year. We eat them because the Torah we read on *Yom Teru`ah* is sweet. In the great psalm to God's Torah, we read: How sweet are Your words to my taste, more than honey in my mouth! (119:103)

We use the shofar because it recalls the sound of alarm to which ancient Israel responded, and is an instrument of the people found in the hands of all communities. It is the people, individually and together that must bind themselves to Yahweh. It was the sound of the shofar growing louder and louder that accompanied thunder and lightning and dense cloud at Har Sinay, when Bene Yisra'el received Yahweh's commandments (Shemot 19.16ff). And it is the shofar that is to be sounded throughout the land at the Yobel, the 50th year of release and restoration from all debts (Wayyiqra 25.9). These important events have great significance to the people, and are associated with a sound the people heard and made themselves in active participation. Still, Yom Teru`ah is the day associated most with the shofar, and even today in most Rabbinic synagogues, the shofar is heard 100 times (notes) over the course of services. Our own often includes that many or more.

For our service we revolve around these themes: The Kingship and Oneness of YHWH; the Call to Repentance symbolized by shofar blasts; Reading the Torah; the unfailing forgiveness of God for Israel; the forgiveness incumbent on those who would ask forgiveness; and the sweetness and joy that our covenant and its aspects offer to our lives and people. It is a mixture of solemnity and celebration.

Celebrating

Here is a suggested havurah style "get together" service for Yom Teru`ah night. We have not fixed the service (or a maḥzor, a service for holy days) officially yet. You might decide to have a bonfire or cookout like we do outdoors. We try to have fun as well as teach and worship. Gather all your wood for the fire and start it just before sundown. You may need chairs, or a table to sit food on also and even roasting sticks if you have a "wiener roast." In other words, prepare everything you'll need that evening beforehand. You should have your shofar and a covering for your head. If you do not have a shofar, drums or the human voice are good with or without the shofar. Ebionites use a shofar to announce every religious event, but Yom Teru`ah is a "shofar holy day" for us. The more shofars present the better. (A shofar is a horn made from a sheep, goat, or antelope—not cattle. A metal trumpet could be used but it is not preferred.)

As twilight is beginning, wearing the tallit and /or head covered, say:

Sheheḥeyanu
Bo-rook at-tah YHWH 'e-loh-hey-noo me-lek hah-oh-lahm, we-`oh-lahm bah-`oh-lah-miym we-`oh-lahm she-'eyn sohf, she-he-ḥe-yah-noo we-qiy-ye-mah-noo we-hi-giy-`ah-noo la-ze-man ha-zeh.
Bend the knee before YHWH our God, King of the universe, world within world, worlds without end, Who has kept us alive and preserved us, and allowed us to reach this season.

Blow a long note (teqi`a gadol) on the shofar, then declare:

Sh'ma Yisra'el YHWH 'eloheynu, YHWH 'eḥad.
Hear O' Israel, YHWH is our God, YHWH alone.

Malkuyot /YHWH as King

Bo-rook et-YHWH ha-m'-vo-rak. Boruk YHWH ha-m'-vo-rak l'-oh-lahm wa-`ed.
Bend the knee before YHWH to Whom we submit. Bend the knee before YHWH to Whom we submit forever and ever.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

“The first day of the seventh month will be a day of rest for you, of remembrance and acclamation, a sacred assembly.You will do no heavy work and you will offer a burnt offering for YHWH.” ’ -Lev 23:24

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Miy kah-moh-kah ba'-ay-liym YHWH? Miy kah-moh-kah ne'-dahr ba-qoh-desh noh-rah t-hil-loht `oh-say fe-le'.

Who compares to You, O' YHWH among mighty powers? Whom compares with Your splendor in holiness, revered with praises, Miracle Maker?

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Zeh 'Ay-liy! YHWH yim-lohk l'-oh-lahm wa`ed!
This is my God! YHWH reigns forever and ever.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Lo' 'iysh Ayl wiy-kaz-zayv oo-ven 'ah-dahm we-yit-ne-ḥahm
God is not a man that He can lie, neither human that He might change his mind.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

"E-lo-hey-noo oo-mal-key-noo dah-vahr: we-'eyn `ohd 'e-loh-hiym mib-bal-`ah-day 'ayl-tzad-diyq oo-moh-shiy-`a 'a-yin zoo-lah-tiy.
Our God, our King says: There are no gods except Me, the God of Justice and Savior, there is nothing but Me.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

He has no body; is not begotten by any father; born of no mother; has no son or daughter; having no wife or consort; no brother or sister.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Hoo dah-vahr: 'A-niy YHWH qe-dohsh-kem boh-rei' yis-rah-'ayl mal-k'-kem.
He says: I am YHWH your Holy One, creator of Yisra'el, your King.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Koh-'ah-mar YHWH Goh-'a-lekah we-yoh-tzer-kah mib-bah-ten 'ah-noh-kiy YHWH `oh-se kohl noh-teh shah-ma-yim le-va-diy roh-qa` hah-'ah-retz miy mei-'it-tiy?
So says YHWH your Redeemer who designed you in the womb; I am YHWH maker of all things, Who stretches forth the heavens by myself; Who lays out the earth —who is with me?

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Koh-'ah-mar YHWH me-lek- yis-rah-ayl we-goh-'a-loh YHWH tze-vah-'oht 'a-niy ri'-shohn wa-'a-niy 'a-ḥa-rohn oo-mi-bal-`ah-day 'eyn 'e-loh-hiym.
Thus says YHWH, King of Yisra'el and his Redeemer, YHWH Tzeva'ot: I am the first and I am the last; there is no god other than Me.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Psalm 47
All peoples, clap your hands, shout out to God with cheering;
For, Yahweh Most High, is to be revered, great King, over all the earth,
He will subjugate peoples under us, and tribes of men beneath our feet.
He chooses for us our heritage, the preeminence of Ya`aqov, whom He loves.

Selah
God goes up amidst loud shouts, Yahweh, amidst the sound of the shofar.
Sing praises for God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises;
For God is king of all the earth, sing praises in skillful melody.
God is King, subduing the gentiles, God is seated upon his holy throne.
The rulers of the peoples have gathered themselves together, also the people of the God of Avraham; For, to God, will belong the shields of the earth, greatly will He be exalted.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

From the Aleinu:
Let us adore the Sovereign of all who formed the universe in the beginning that he has not made us like the heathens of the earth, nor fashioned us like the godless of the land; that has not made our destiny as theirs, nor cast our lot with their multitudes.
Wa-a-naḥ-noo koh-r'-`iym oo-mish-ta-ḥa-wiym oo-moh-diym lif-ney me-lek mal-key ha-me-lah-kiym ha-qoh-desh bo-rook hoo.
We bend the knee, bow in worship, and give thanks to the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

We-hah-yah YHWH le-me-lek `al-kohl-hah-ah-retz ba-yohm ha-hoo' yi-yeh YHWH 'ah-ḥahd
oo-she-moh 'ah-ḥahd.
And YHWH will rule over all the earth in the that day, and it will be YHWH alone, and His name alone.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Zikronot /Remembrance

Psalm 27
YHWH is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? YHWH is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh, even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.
Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise up against me, even then will I be confident.

Rabbinic Jews and sounding the shofar on Shabbat…

This year (2006) Rosh Hashana /Yom Teru`ah falls on a Shabbat and Rabbinic Jews will not be sounding the shofar in their services. Ebionites do not suspend the sounding of the shofar on Shabbat. Why do they? The do this according to Talmudic interpretation of scripture, while admitting the Torah calls for blowing the shofar.

> Whence [in the Scripture] is this rule derived? — R. Levi b. Lahma said: "One verse says, 'a solemn rest, a memorial of blast of horns,' while another verse says, 'it is a day of blowing the horn unto you!' [Yet] there is no contradiction, as one refers to a festival which falls on Sabbath and the other to a festival which falls on a weekday." (Rosh Hashanah 29b)

But even the Mishna reports that the shofar was blown at the Temple, Shabbat or not. The sages still decided that it might entail work and thus prohibited the shofar on the Shabbat.

> Rava said, 'According to the Written Law it is allowed, and it is the Rabbis who prohibited it as a precaution; as stated by Rabbah; for Rabbah said, "All are under obligation to blow the Shofar but not all are skilled in the blowing of the Shofar. [Hence] there is a danger that perhaps one will take it in his hand [on Sabbath] and go to an expert to learn and carry it four cubits in public domain." The same reason applies to the Lulav and the same reason to the Megillah (Rosh Hashanah 16a)

There are various other rabbinic and qabalistic justifications for not hearing th shofar on a Shabbat. But the Ebionites disagree with these excuses. We gather worshippers with the sound of the shofar for all occasions.

One thing have I asked of YHWH, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of YHWH all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of YHWH, and to visit early in His temple.
For He conceals me in His pavilion in the day of evil; He hides me in the covert of His tent; He lifts me up upon a rock.
And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; and I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices with trumpet-sound; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto YHWH.
Hear, O YHWH, when I call with my voice, and be gracious unto me, and answer me.
In Thy behalf my heart hath said: 'Seek ye My face'; Thy face, YHWH, will I seek.
Hide not Thy face from me; put not Thy servant away in anger; Thou hast been my help; cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
For though my father and my mother have forsaken me, YHWH will embrace me.
Teach me Thy way, O YHWH; and lead me in an even path, because of them that lie in wait for me.
Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out violence.
If I had not believed to look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living!—
Wait on YHWH; be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for YHWH
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for YHWH hath comforted His people, and hath compassion upon His afflicted.
But Zion said: 'YHWH hath forsaken me, Adonay hath forgotten me.'
Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee.
Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.
-Is 49:13

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Remember these things, Ya`aqov, and Yisrael; for you are my servant: I have formed you; you are my servant: Israel, you shall not be forgotten by me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return to me; for I have redeemed you. -Is 44:21

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Efrayim is my dear son, a pleasant child and though I spoke against him, I still fondly remember him; thus I long for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, says YHWH. -Jer 31:20

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

So says the Adonay YHWH; I will even deal with you as you have done, despising the promise by breaking the covenant.
Nevertheless I will remember my covenant from the days of your youth with you, and I will maintain with you an unending covenant. -Eze 16:59

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Behold, the days come, says YHWH, that I will make new the covenant with the house of Yisrael, and with the house of Yehudah:
Not in the way that I made covenant with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; this agreement with me they broke, although I was an husband to them, says YHWH:
But such *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; in latter days, says YHWH, I will put

my Torah inside of them, and write it in their hearts to be their God, and they will be my people.
And they will teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know YHWH because they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says YHWH: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their transgression no more.
So says YHWH, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when its waves roar; YHWH Tzeva`ot is his name:
If those ordinances end before me, says YHWH, *then* the seed of Yisrael also would forever cease from being a nation before me.
So says YHWH; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth beneath searched out, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says YHWH.
-Jer 31:31

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Remember the Torah of Moses my servant, which I commanded to him in Horev for all Yisrael, the statutes and judgments. -Mal 4:4

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

I, *even* I, *am* He that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins. -Is 43:25

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Shofrot /Shofars

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. -Ex 19:16

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. -Ex 19:19

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

And God spake all these words, saying,
I *am* YHWH thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:
Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I YHWH thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;
And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
Thou shalt not take the name of YHWH thy God in vain; for YHWH will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of YHWH thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:
For *in* six days YHWH made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore YHWH blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which YHWH thy God giveth thee.
Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.
And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the shofar, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

He manifested Himself with the sound of the shofar, YHWH amidst the sound of the shofar. -Ps 47:6

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

With trumpets and the sound of the shofar raise up joyful noise before the King, YHWH. -Ps 98:6

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Sound the shofar on the new month, and on the full moon, for our day of celebration. It is a statute for Yisrael, indeed an ordinance of the God of Ya`aqov. -Ps 81:4

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Praise Yah, Praise ye God in his sanctuary, Praise him, in his boundless firmament:
Praise him, for his mighty deeds, Praise him, according to his exceeding greatness:
Praise him, with the blast of the shofar, Praise him, with the harp and lyre:
Praise him, with drum and dance,—Praise him, with stringed instrument and flute,
Praise him, with ringing cymbals,—Praise him, with crashing cymbals:
Let, every breathing thing, praise Yah, Praise Yah! -Ps 150

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

Avinu Malkeynu
'ah-viy-noo mal-key-noo ze-kohr ra-ḥa-mey-kah oo-ke-voosh ka-`as-kah we-kal-leih dah-ver we-ḥe-rev we-rah-`ahv oosh-viy oo-mash-ḥiyt we-`ah-wohn oosh-mad oo-ma-gei-fah oo-fe-ga` ra` we-kol ma-ḥa-lah we-kol te-qah-lah we-kol qe-tah-tah we-kol miy-nay foo-re-`ah-niy-yoht we-kol ge-zei-rah rah`ah we-sin-`at ḥin-nahm. mei-`ah-ley-noo oo-mei-`al kol be-ney v'-riy-te-kah.

Our Father, our King, remember Your mercy, show us your compassion and remove from us and all the children of Your covenant: pestilence, sword and famine, destruction, captivity, wickedness and

plague, all bad things, every disease, every stumbling-block, contention, every evil government, and all oppression.

oo-ke-tohv le-ḥay-yiym toh-viym kol be-ney v'-riyt-kah. we-kol ha-ḥay-yiym yoh-doo-kah, se-lah wiy-ha-le-loo et-shim-kah be-e-met hah-'ayl ye-shoo-`ah-tei-noo se-lah. bo-rook at-tah YHWH ha-tohv shim-kah oo-le-kah nah-'eh le-hoh-doht.

Inscribe all the children of Your covenant for a happy life. And may all living things bow before you always and praise Your Name in truthfullness , O' God, Who is our salvation and our help. Worthy of worship are You O' YHWH, Source of good, and to Whose name it is right to give thanks.

Sim Shalom
Siym sha-lohm toh-vah oo-vrah-kah ḥein wah-ḥe-sed we-ra-ḥa-miym `ah-ley-noo we-`al kol yis-rah-'ayl `a-me-kah. Bor-kei-noo 'ah-viy-noo koo-lah-noo ke-'e-ḥahd be-'ohr pah-ney-kah. Kiy be-'ohr pah-ney-kah nah-ta-tah lah-noo YHWH 'e-loh-hey-noo toh-rat ḥay-yiym we-a-ha-vat ḥe-sed oo-tze-dah-qah oo-vra-kah we-ra-ḥa-miym we-ḥay-yiym we-sha-lohm. We-tohv be-`ey-ney-kah le-vah-reik 'et `a-me-kah yis-rah-ayl be-kol eit oo-ve-kol shah-`ah bish-loh-me-kah.

Our Father, grant peace and well-being, blessing and favor, loving-kindness and mercy to us and all Israel, Your People. Bless us Father, all of us together with the light of Your Presence because the light You have given us O' YHWH our God is the living Torah, loving-kindness and justice, blessing and mercy, life and peace. May it always be good in Your eyes to bless Israel and all Your children wit h Your peace.

Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah
Shofar: teqi`a/ shevarim/ teruah

This suggested service can be repeated throughout the holy day. To it you may add your own blessings over food, Kiddush, etc.

Enjoy yourself with food and drink and fun.

Composite Photoart, The Miqdash Restored © Shemayah Phillips 2006. All Rights Reserved.

קורבנות

Sacrifices: What Covers Your Transgressions?

In this article, at this time of the year called the Day of Purgations, commonly called "Day of Atonement," we discuss the sacrificial system in ancient Israel and what it has to do with canceling transgression, what transgressions were covered by the sacrificial rites performed in ancient times and why? Are you in need of a blood sacrifice today to "cleanse your sins?"

Instead of an article on liturgy and practices to observe *Yom Hakippurim*, we offer instead a basic article needed to understand the relationship between the sacrificial system as it addresses sin—what it does and does not do in regards to your spiritual state before God.

The sacrificial system of ancient Israel is one of the most misunderstood subjects in religious history. Many of the most important doctrines of the Christian religion are based on odd interpretations of sin and sacrifice in Israelite religion. Some Jews also have a deficient understanding of the matter.

"Jesus does not 'save.' Save you from what? Destruction or torment in the Afterlife? Such ideas come from pagan religion."

Perhaps you have been confronted by Christians who, on discovering you worship God instead of Jesus and do not "accept his sacrifice" for your sins, inform you that you had better start sacrificing animals. They may even ask you if you *do* sacrifice animals in order to be *saved*! Some say that if Jesus is not the sacrifice for sins, then who needs him for anything. (But there is no need for sacrifice for salvation!)

In other words, they blame a faulty solution to their invented problem. They claim "Jesus is the answer!" but for what real biblical question can he provide the answer? Jesus does not "save." Save you from what? Destruction or torment in the afterlife? Such ideas come from pagan religion. Save you from sin? Christians hardly believe, if at all, in the Torah that tells us how to not live in sin and how to be rid of sin.

Are we "washed in the blood of the lamb"? The scriptures never instruct us to wash in the blood of anything, much less a man; although, actual baptisms in animal blood can be found in religions very similar to Christianity during the time period in which Christianity developed. The devotees of Mithra were baptized in a bull's blood.

How did the Christians tie such weird ideas to the sacrificial system described in our Bible? The theology described in their "New Testament" involving vicarious sacrifice, blood symbolism, and mystery religion type salvation is not of God. We may never untangle the mess of what pagan systems of belief Christianity has borrowed from, and the occult practices incorporated into it. But more constructively, we can start clean and look at the scriptural rather than imagined ideas of sin and the sacrificial system.

What is sin?

Even a Christian can tell us that sin is the transgression of the Torah (1John 3:4). Even in a slightly twisted way, Paul of Tarsus admits that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). But the child of Israel knows that sins are clearly and carefully described in scripture, that all sins are not equal and to commit one sin does not make you guilty of all (as James 2:10 seems to imply).

Basically sin is the willful disregard of a

commandment of God (positive commandment) or willfully transgressing a prohibitive commandment. Ultimately it might be said that all sin is an act against God Who sets the boundaries for behavior, but there are clearly sins against God as distinguished from sins against fellow Israelites, our fellow man, and individuals, and even animals and the natural world! Sins consist of different types in grades of severity:

- *ḥēṭʾ*/ *ḥăṭṭāʾāh*/ *ḥaṭṭāʾt* (a misstep, a mistake) committed through ignorance or misunderstanding;
- *ʿāwôn* (committed with knowledge of it);
- *pešaʿ* or *mereḏ* committed as a deliberate rejection of the commandment in rebellion against God); and *rešaʿ* (intentional wickedness, with malicious intent).

In Psalm 106:6 we see all three types, or degrees of transgression: As our fathers, we misstep (*ḥāṭāʾnû*), we transgress (*heʿĕwēnû*), we act rebelliously (*hiršāʿnû*).

In biblical religion there is no transgression which cannot be repaired or repented of. Reparation could be capital punishment, but that punishment and loss of life is the "atonement" for the crime. There is no "unforgivable sin," like Christianity creates, for which a person deserves eternal damnation. God damns no one to this.

Sins are clearly described and in many cases prescriptions are given to repair sins (See below).

But what about sins like "coveting" a neighbor's goods? (This is one of the ten principles, AKA, "Ten Commandments.") Is there a punishment for coveting? A Christian may be tempted to use such in support of Yeshua's "sins of the heart"—unknown, unmanifested, but still sins—according to his interpretation (Matt 5:21ff, including anger, which Yeshua, it seems, is also guilty). Yeshua is correct and not the only rabbi to realize that transgressions begin with desire and premeditation. But there is no clear punishment in God's commandments regardless of what we "do" in our mind.

Indeed, such things may lead to other manifested sins or an attitude that fosters sin, exactly as Yeshua says. But there is generally a resolution for all our accumulated sins and sinful intents. Our "atonement" is death.

It is Ezekiel 18 that tells us the working of God in regard to sin and what will be required (death).

[19]Will ye then say. Why hath not the son borne a part of the iniquity of the father? But the son hath done justice and righteousness, All my statutes, hath observed and done them He shall surely live. [20]The person that sinneth, the same, shall die,— the son shall not bear a part of the iniquity of, the father, neither shall a father bear a part of the iniquity of the son, the righteousness of the righteous upon himself, shall be. And the lawlessness of a lawless man upon himself, shall be. [21]But as for the lawless man—When he shall turn back from all his sins which he hath committed, And observe all my statutes, And do justice and righteousness He shall surely live. He shall not die: [22]None of his transgressions which he hath committed shall be remembered against him, —In his righteousness which he hath done, he shall live. [23]Could I take delight, in the death of the lawless? Demandeth My Lord. Yahweh. Must it not be in his turning from his ways in which case he shall live? [24]But when a righteous man I shall turn away from his righteousness and do that which is perverse, Shall do according to all the abominations which the lawless man hath done Shall he live? None of his righteous acts which he hath done shall be remembered, In his treachery

wherein he hath been treacherous, And in his sin wherein he hath sinned In them, shall he die. [25]Can ye then say— The way of My Lord will not be equal? Hear I pray you O house of Israel, Will my way, not be equal? Will not your ways be unequal? [26]When a righteous man shall turn away from his righteousness and do that which is perverse and die because of those things In his own perversity which he hath done, shall he die. [27]But when a lawless man turneth away from his lawlessness which he hath done, And hath done justice and righteousness He, shall save his own soul, alive: [28]When he considered, then he turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, He shall surely live. He shall not die. [29]Can the house of Israel then say- The way of My Lord will not be equal? Will my ways, not be equal O house of Israel? Will not your ways be unequal? (Rotherham)

God's people, if we take Ezekiel 37 literally, will be resurrected after death (without mention of any punishment beyond death or in resurrection for their sins) and gather His people from out of the gentiles' lands and place a Davidic king over them to live in Torah. (No mention of gentiles being resurrected there.)

A Christian minister might complain about God's "inequality" as described by Ezekiel. He should complain, indeed, because this passage destroys his so-called doctrine of *original sin* and of *vicarious atonement*, both biblically false.

But there is no "atonement" in sacrifices, and certainly not in a human sacrifice. Moses wanted to "atone" for the sin of Israel worshipping a golden idol and God refused this (Exodus 32:31ff). Abraham was kept from going through with sacrificing his son to show the evil of human sacrifice.

Likewise, we reiterate what may not be clear enough to you: all sins are not *equally bad* as taught in Christianity. Stealing an apple and murdering a man are not equal in sin or in punishment. The real idea behind the Christian idea is that all men are imperfect and unfit before God, based on their original sin belief. Ultimately it originates in thoroughly pagan (particularly Gnostic) ideas of human imperfection and dualism between the flesh and spirit, thus making every physical creation consisting of evil matter and thus guilty (and imperfect) for simply existing in a form of matter rather than spirit. According to this all matter, whether a man or universe, is in a state of damnation and to be destroyed and only a spiritual belief can release the holy spark imprisoned within matter so it can be "saved" by returning to "God" the spirit.

What is Sacrifice for?

In the scriptures the Torah gives us *do's and don'ts* such as, 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'tie a cord of blue in the fringe of your garment…' 'Do not charge interest…' 'You must not lie with a man the way you lie with a woman…' 'You must love your comrade as yourself…' 'You may eat fish that have scales and fins…' and many others. Each of these are given clear remedies such as capital punishment, repayment, ejection from Israel, and waiting a time and immersing to remove impurity. Impurity means that a person is unfit to enter the Temple precincts due to a temporary defilement.

The Temple (and earlier "Tent") was the place where Israelites came before God, an extremely sacred compound. People did not go to the Temple and say, 'I have committed murder and I will enter to sacrifice an animal to make me saved.' No sacrifice "corrected" such willful sins. (For example, the only remedy for spilling a man's blood , and other

capital offenses, was that the killer's blood was spilt. This was the so-called atonement for this sin.)

If you stole from your neighbor, say an ox (i.e., grand larceny), or a sheep (petty larceny), you repaid your neighbor, five oxen or four sheep (Lev 22:1), respectively. The reparation is made, the sin is "atoned." You could go to the Temple and sacrifice 50 sheep, or "Jesus" and your sin still would remain un-atoned if you did not repay the victim! (And after sacrificing a human like Jesus there would be a death sentence for you on a number of counts, like murder, idolatry, and abominating the Temple.)

"No animal died for sacrifice to pay for human sins as a vicarious sacrifice."

Since such deliberate transgressions against God's commandments had a remedial avenue to atonement, why the blood and sacrifices? Blood and sacrifice were remedies for *impurity*—bringing defilement into the Temple precincts. And it can be seen that when a person knew they had become ritually impure—defiled and barred from the Temple—they knew a prescription to remedy the temporary impurity. Eating unclean animals (Lev 11), having a menstrual flow (15:19ff), or seminal flow (15:2ff), touching a dead thing (11:39ff), having a skin disease (13:3ff), recently giving birth (12:2ff), and other things caused impurity. More often than not, you had to immerse yourself completely in water and wait a period of time. This is still done today in a *miqweh* (ritual immersion pool) by observant Jews.

There were enough sources of impurity that it was hard to know if you were ritually impure. In fact, the sin offerings for sacrifice in the Temple were not to "cover" known defilements or deliberate sins. Such sacrifices were only for sins you were not aware of as a source of defilement.

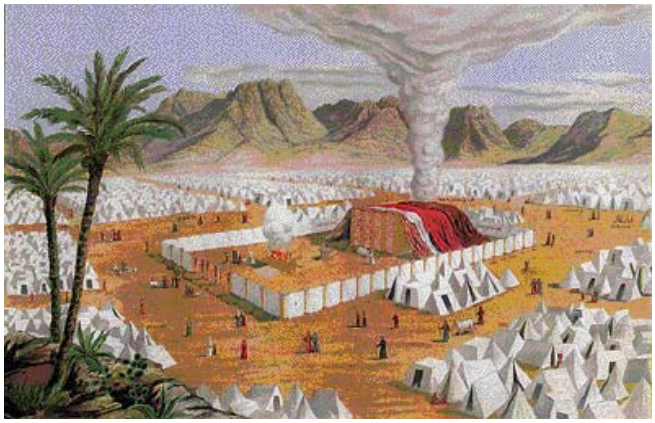
These defilements were seen in the way we today see contagious diseases. Unknown, unintentional "sins" could be carried into the pure environment of the Temple to contaminate it. Blood acted as a germicide, of sorts, in order to decontaminate the sacred precincts. Each person carried the contamination into the Temple precincts, even if he were apparently "sinless" after following the prescription to alleviate the defilement. (Think of the millions of microscopic animals, living or dead that inhabit your body.) For example, if on your way to the Temple you stepped on a dead bug, you had contacted a source of defilement (contamination) without realizing it (Lev 11:31ff). Ritual pools were situated in locations around the Temple Mount, in buildings, including homes of the priests and the wealthy who could have their own personal *miqweh*. Still, blood from a sacrifice was required to supply the "cleanser" for the Temple area itself.

In most other ancient societies, sacrifices and other measures were used to either attract or expel demons, spirits, or other gods during service to a god (see Milgrom: 1991, 249, 259ff; also Ex 12:7ff). In Yahwistic worship, priestly supervision eliminated this

possibility. Blood neutralized impurity of individuals and, accumulatively, the people and Land within the Temple precincts. Yet there are similarities between Israelite sacrificial rites and thinking and that of their neighbors (Milgrom: 1991, 1067).

Among Israel and her neighbors, only Israel believed that the life force of a man or animal was in its blood. As the giver of life, only YHWH was its rightful possessor, and thus we have some odd sounding wordings in the Bible, as when Abel's *bloods* (*dammim*) cried out from the ground to God (Gen 4:10). This is why blood is required for bloodshed of animal or man. It is why animal blood must not be ingested in any way (Gen 9:4-6). And it is also why the blood of an animal was poured out into the ground, and why animals were to be killed in a specific manner and originally under supervision of specialized personnel of the tent Sanctuary and later Temple; and in later times according to laws of *kashrut* (kosher) to kill our animals in a precise and humane way, including the removal of its blood. We are granted only the flesh of an animal but not its life-force which belongs only to He Who gave it.

When a man offered up an animal in a ritual way, he was assuring that he was not making a sacrifice to another god. Some ancient *chthonic* (underworld) gods were summoned by pouring blood into a trench in the earth. Priestly supervision eliminated this possibility. But the only sin a man paid for with a sacrifice to YHWH was his "murder" of the animal as a fellow creature of God to provide a sacrifice and also meat to eat. He "atoned" by giving the blood back "to God."



He was making an admission that God allowed man a *concession* to kill and eat an animal (Gen 1:29; 3:21). This blood of an innocent victim was "full of life" and able to purge and neutralize the defilement caused by sin, sin which is associated with death (Lev 17:11ff). It is a matter of ritual, not salvation. No animal died for sacrifice to pay for human sins as a vicarious sacrifice. So the belief that any man, including "Jesus," could "pay the price of sin" that Christianity is based upon is a total sham.

Types of Sacrifices

The types of animal sacrifices further points out their purgative purposes. In the sacrificial system of the Bible there are animal and vegetable (grains, wine, oil, etc.) offerings. The main animal offerings are the *ʿōlāh*, *ḥaṭṭāʾt*, *ʾāšām*, and *šĕlāmîm*. The incomparable work of biblical scholar Jacob Milgrom (1991, 2000, 2001) has now confirmed the non-vicarious nature of sacrifice. By *vicarious* we mean that something or someone is eligible to pay the price ("atone") of sin committed by another.

In the past *ḥaṭṭāʾt* has often been translated as sin-offering, but *ḥaṭṭāʾt* is a means of decontaminating the precincts of the Temple

Type	Occasion	Animal	C/P	M/F	O/V
Ḥaṭṭat (Inner)	Yom Hakippurim Communal	Kid	C	M	O
	Yom Hakippurim Kohen Gadol	Bull	P	M	O
	Matter hidden from the congregation of Israel	Bull	C	M	O
	Communal Idolatry	Kid	C	M	O
	Anointed Kohen	Bull	P	M	O
Ḥaṭṭat (Outer)	Added (Musaf) Rôš Ḥôdeš, 3 Feasts, Rôš Hašānā, Yôm Kippur	Kid	C	M	O
	With 2 loaves on Šavû`ôt	Kid	C	M	O
	Personal defilement	Kid or lamb	P	F	O
	Personal idolatry	Kid	P	F	O
	Ruler's he-goat	Kid	P	M	O
	Impurity of nazir or "leprosy" (metsora)	Lamb	P	F	O
`Olāh (Incinerated Offering)	Daily tamid	Lamb morning /evening	C	M	O
	Musaf on Shabbat	2 lambs	C	M	O
	Musaf Rôš Ḥôdeš, Pēsāḥ (7 days), Šavû`ôt	2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs	C	M	O
	Musaf Rôš Hašānā, Yôm Hakippurim	Bull, ram, 7 lambs	C	M	O
	Musaf Sûkkôt (7 days)	13-7 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs	C	M	O
	Musaf Šĕmînî Aṣeret	Bull, ram, 7 lambs	C	M	O
	With Omer	Lamb	C	M	O
	With two loaves Šavû`ôt	Bull, 2 rams, 7 lambs	C	M	O
	Kohen Gadol on Yôm Hakippurim	Ram	P	M	O
	Re'iya on 3 Feasts	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M	O
	Post partum, nazir, metsora impurity	Lamb	P	M	O
	Communal idolatry	Bull	C	M	O
	Convert	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M	O
	Voluntary	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M	V
	Extra (when altar is idle)	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M	V
Ašām	Doubtful, forgotten-remebered oaths, etc.	Ram, doves	P	M	O
	Accidental contact with impure	Lamb	P	M	O
Šĕlāmîm	With two loaves Šavû`ôt	2 lambs	P	M	O
	3 Feasts celebration and joy	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M/F	O
	Impurity of nazir	Ram	P	M	O
	Voluntary	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M/F	V
	Thanks	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M/F	V
Others	Bechor	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M	O
	Ma'aser	Sheep, goat, or cattle	P	M/F	O
	Pēsāḥ	Lamb or kid	P	M	O

After *Stone Edition Artscroll Tanach*, 2001, p. 2031. P/C Personal/Communal; M/F Male/Female; O/V Obligatory/Voluntary

from the defilement of sins which entered with the offerer as explained above. Yet it is not a sacrifice for that person's actual sin to be "done away with" in a vicarious way. On Yom Hakippurim the communal sacrifice was a kid goat while the high priest's personal sacrifice was a bull. The sacrifice for personal defilement was a female lamb or kid goat as it was for personal idolatry (something unintentional that might be construed as idolatry—actual, deliberate idolatry was a capital offense). Also notice that there were no voluntary *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offerings; this purification of defilement from unintentional sins was mandatory. (For example, if Yeshua or any of his followers participated in Temple worship, they would have made a *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offering to neutralize the defilement they carried into the Temple area even after immersing themselves beforehand.) The fat was burnt, but the remainder of the meat went to the priesthood, sacrifices being their food source and "income." (See Milgrom, 1991: 226-292)

The *ʿōlāh* was an offering that was totally incinerated on the altar and could be a bull, a male sheep, or goat without defects or diseases, or a turtledove or young pigeon. In English translations it has been called *burnt offering*, *whole burnt offering* or sacrifice, *holocaust*, etc. It was typically a communal offering (on behalf of all) but could be a personal, voluntary sacrifice, by a *ger* on conversion, by a high priest, a woman who had given birth recently, or a nazir ("nazirite"). This sacrifice was an entreaty to God, and the blood was splashed on the sides of the altar as a purgation and expiation for the slaying of the animal. It created a pleasing scent like incense to get the attention and favor of God through a gift. It did not "cover" a sin for which a sinner had come to the Temple to erase. Male animals were the most expendable. Only the hide of the bull was kept by the priest for his use. (See Milgrom, 1991: 226-292)

The *ʾāšām* offering, mistranslated as a "guilt" offering, was made for matters that gave a person some worry about something that had happened that might contaminate them and therefore the Temple. It can also be seen as a sacrifice for sacrilege. It could be something they may have forgotten like an promise unfulfilled. Milgrom calls this a *reparation sacrifice*, and says it is given over something that gives a feeling of guilt. It is a personal sacrifice for which a male ram (or turtledoves /young pigeons) is offered. (See Milgrom, 1991: 292-378)

"...if Yeshua or any of his followers participated in Temple worship, they would have made a *ḥaṭṭāʾt* offering to neutralize the defilement they carried into the Temple.…"

The *šĕlāmîm*, rendered as *well-being* or *peace offering*, was a personal one given at Shavu'ot (Feast of Weeks), the three pilgrim feasts, by a nazir, or voluntarily at any time. Either a male or female animal could be given on the three feasts or voluntarily. It was a source of properly slaughtered meat for the individual and his family and an occasion of rejoicing. (Very little red meat was eaten normally.) The fat was burnt, the breast was given to the

priesthood, and the thigh to the high priest. (See Milgrom, 1991: 202-226)

Sacrifices were a *de facto* "system of fines," a source of properly slaughtered food, as well as revenue for the priesthood. They did not rid anyone of sin, but removed the threat of defilement to the Temple precincts.

Passover Night "Sacrifice"

When the Hebrews were having their freedom worked out in Egypt, YHWH sent "destroyers" to that land to kill all the firstborn. The Hebrews were told to kill a lamb and apply the blood to the door posts. This was an act accomplishing two things at once. First, Hebrews were killing and eating an animal sacred to the Egyptians, and deliberately offending one of their gods depicted as a sheep, brazenly smearing its blood on their homes. Few Egyptians would have done this, thus making a clear distinction of who was liable to the destroyers. Moses tells the Pharaoh that Israelite sacrifice would involve animals which would be abominable to sacrifice in the eyes of Egyptians (Exodus 8:25). Second, this blood in effect acted more as a substance to ward off "the angels" of death, in the same way other ancient peoples warded off demons from their homes and temples rather than make Israelite homes in Egypt "temples" to be purified through sacrifice.

Later, killing of lambs for Passover had as much religious significance as a turkey on Thanksgiving. Passover harked back to a defining event in the national identity of the Hebrew people.

Sacrificial Doubts

Were the commandments for sacrifice divinely given? We must be honest and notice some passages of scripture that may bring doubt as to the nature of the origins of the sacrificial system.

In the book of Joshua (24:14) Israel is told to put away the gods that their fathers (ancestors) *served* beyond the Euphrates (the River, i.e., in Mesopotamia) and also in Egypt. So the ancestors not only came from stock acquainted with other gods, but even after Yahwism had begun with Abraham, his own descendants had participated in cults of Egyptian gods. The constant warnings that Israelites must reject the gods of the gentiles and the way they worshipped them is a telling indictment that many of them had grave difficulties doing so.

While there are important differences between the Israelite sacrificial cult described in scripture (most notably that the offerer of a sacrifice did the killing unlike most ancient cults; and the elimination of demons / malevolent powers by sacrifice is replaced by elimination of ritual impurity), there are also similarities. The architecture of the Temple has strong Canaanite influence and sacrificial animals parallel with animals sacrificed at Ugarit. The Canaanites were basically Egyptian vassals (before 2300 BCE slowly abandoning the territory the following four centuries). Northern Israelite worship used a bull calf as an idolatrous symbol, and YHWH may have been equated with El or Ba`al. Archaeology has revealed popular figurines of female goddesses throughout the land and also graffiti depicting YHWH and His

"asherah" which (who?) can be found spoken of in the scriptures as well.

The requirement of a priesthood to "police" sacrifices is obvious. While the ritual slaughter customs safeguarding animals with the most humane death can still be found in the kosher rules today among observant Jews, in ancient times it kept sacrifices from being devoted to other gods. Two approaches to this supervision can be seen. At first multiple shrines administered by priests were allowed followed by a centralization of sacrifice at Jerusalem. In spite of this development, there was a "Temple" on the island of Yeb (Elephantine)

"Do not, on your part trust in false words, saying,—The temple of Yahweh The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh they are! But, if ye shall thoroughly amend, your ways, and your doings...Then will I cause you to dwell In this place, In the land which I gave to your fathers,—From one age even unto another"

in Egypt serving Judeans there, and also one among the northern tribes after the kingdom was divided.

The prophet Jeremiah appears to be questioning the sacrificial cult entirely:

> 7:1The word that came unto Jeremiah, from Yahweh saying:— 2Stand thou in the gate of the house of Yahweh, and thou shalt proclaim there this word,—and shalt say—Hear ye the word of Yahweh all Judah ye who are entering in at these gates, to bow down unto Yahweh: 3Thus, saith Yahweh of hosts God of Israel, Amend your ways, and your doings,—That I may cause you to dwell in this place. 4Do not, on your part trust in false words, saying,—The temple of Yahweh The temple of Yahweh, The temple of Yahweh they are! 5But, if ye shall thoroughly amend, your ways, and your doings,—Shall thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbour; 6The sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, shall not oppress, And innocent blood, shall not shed in this place,—And after other gods, shall not walk to your own hurt, 7Then will I cause you to dwell In this place, In the land which I gave to your fathers,—From one age even unto another, 8Lo! ye, on your part, are trusting in false words,—To no profit! 9Are ye to steal, commit murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal,—and walk after other gods whom ye have not known; 10And will ye then come in and stand before me in this house whereon my Name hath been called, and say,—We have set ourselves free,—for the purpose of committing all these abominations? 11A den of robbers, hath this house on which my Name hath been called become in your own eyes? I, also,—lo! I have seen it Declareth Yahweh. 12For go I pray you, unto my place which was in Shiloh, Where I made my Name to dwell, at first,—And see what I did to it, because of the wickedness of my people Israel! 13Now, therefore—Because ye have done all these deeds Declareth Yahweh,—And though I spake unto you betimes speaking, Yet ye hearkened not, And though I cried unto you Yet ye answered not, 14Therefore will I do to the house Whereon my Name hath been called Wherein, ye, are trusting, Even to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers,—Just as I did unto Shiloh; 15And will cast you out from before me,—Just as I have cast out All your brethren, All the seed of Ephraim….20Wherefore, Thus, saith My Lord Yahweh—Lo! mine anger and mine indignation, are about to be poured out upon this place, On man and on beast, and On the tree of the field and On the fruit of the ground,—And it shall burn and shall not be quenched.
> 21Thus, saith Yahweh of hosts God of Israel,—Your ascending-offerings, add ye unto your peace-offerings and eat ye flesh. 22For *I bade not your fathers Neither commanded I them, In the day I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt,—Concerning the matter of ascending-offering and peace-offering;* 23But, this thing, I commanded them—saying, Hearken ye unto my voice, So will I become unto you—a God, And, ye, shall become unto me—a people,—Ye shall therefore walk in all the way that I may command you, To the end it may be well with you; (Rotherham; italics mine)

At least some of the sacrificial rites are here being considered to be innovations, the one not mentioned is the purgative sacrifices to

decontaminate impurity (the *ḥaṭṭāʾt*). At any rate Jeremiah denigrates the importance of sacrifice, especially in comparison to doing Torah with justice. This is mirrored by Isaiah:

> 66:1Thus, saith Yahweh, The, heavens, are my throne, and The earth, is my footstool: Where then is the house which ye can build me? Or where is my place of rest? 2For, all these things, hath mine own hand made, And all these things came into being,—Declareth Yahweh. But for this one, will I look around, For him who is humbled and smitten in spirit, And so careth anxiously for my word. 3He that slaughtereth an ox, *is as one* who smiteth a man, He that sacrificeth a lamb, *is as one* who beheadeth a dog, he that causeth a meal-offering to ascend, offereth it with the blood of swine, He that maketh a memorial of frankincense, *is as one* who blesseth iniquity: They indeed, have chosen their own ways, And in their own abominations, their soul hath found delight; 4I, also, will choose the things that vex them. And the things they dread, will I bring upon them, Because—I called and there was none to answer, I spake, and they hearkened not,—But did that which was wicked in mine eyes, And of that wherein I delighted not, made choice. (Rotherham)

Remember that in both of these prophets, and others, acts of justice according to the parameters of Torah are the things YHWH requests, while the Temple and sacrifice is being pushed aside. We will come back to this theme when we discuss what type of "atonement" God really requires.

Many people have pointed to such scripture in the past to criticize Judaism, particularly the Christians. But our Torah is not being criticized. But only the idea of a Temple and the system of purification by sacrificial animal blood as a substitute for obeying God's commandments is being challenged in these scriptures.

What is also being criticized in the prophets is the idea of vicarious atonement (as we have seen in Ezekiel above); the Torah not being kept; and the need for a sacrifice of any kind; and even the requirement of a Temple to worship God! Each of these are more of a concern and exposure of Christianity which claims a vicarious sacrifice in the human sacrifice of Jesus for sins, its rejection or spiritualizing of God's commandments, its misrepresentation of sacrifice in order to support its theology, and its obsession with churches, and church attendance each as substitute "house of god." In other words, Christianity far exceeds the sins and shortcomings of God's People denounced by the prophets! It creates rival temples where a strange sacrifice is offered. This is the problem a central Temple tried to remedy in ancient times.

There is also the problem of *theanthropism* (anthropomorphism) in the Bible and sacrifice language strongly opposed and considered inappropriate in later times (example, God enjoying the smell of sacrificial offerings). This may be a vestige of a more pagan period in Israelite history.

Martyrdom as Atonement?

The idea of Yeshua as an atonement for sins is not the language of sacrifice but instead of martyrdom.

The ultimate punishment for Israel was not to go to the Christian hell, but to be left to their own selves and be dispossessed of their Promised Land by the gentiles—just as the gentiles had once lost that land due to their evil practices before Israel entered the Land.

In the past Israel and Judah had been conquered, and deported to other lands. Their conquerors did not require them to

reject God. But in the times after Alexander the Great, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes made strong efforts to abolish Yahwistic religion, destroying sacred writings, punishing observance of Shabbat, and abominating the Temple. These events generated a response in Jewish literature through the books of Daniel, the Maccabees, and others. Instead of being punished by God for sin, they felt they were being punished for both sin and observance as well; and instead of being "vomited out" of the Land, they remained there while being oppressed, their religion attacked as it had never been before, and made to witness gentile rule of their Land.

"Martyrdom in ancient times takes on the same spiritually patriotic aspects found in modern Middle Eastern martyrdom. The Holocaust also can be seen in the same way."

In this period we see the development of the *martyr*, who is guilty of nothing but remaining true to God, killed unjustly, and perhaps instead of those actually guilty of whatever sin has caused this horrid situation. The innocent blood of martyrs, like seven martyred brothers in the Book of 2Maccabees 6:18-7:42, is spoken of as an atonement for the sins of the nation. The Church retains their legend and sees them as saints and sees a direct comparison to *Christ*:

> "There were seven Maccabees with their worshipful mother, and a priest named Eleazar which would eat no swine's flesh because it was defended in their law. And after that it is contained in the first book of the Maccabees, they suffered great torments, and such as never were heard tofore, and it is to understand that the church of the orient maketh the solemnities of the saints of that one and of that other Testament. And the church of the occident maketh no feast of them of the Old Testament, save of the Innocents, because that the souls of the saints of that time descended into hell, but she maketh feast of the Innocents because Jesu Christ was slain in every each of them, and also of the Maccabees. And there be four reasons wherefore the church maketh solemnities of the Maccabees, howbeit that they descended into hell. The first reason is because they had prerogative of martyrdom not tofore like heard, and above that any other of the Old Testament have suffered. And therefore be they privileged that their passion be solemnised by their merit. –The Golden Legend

This idea is an unbiblical innovation (as well as some other beliefs of the times, such as praying for the dead, and the intercession of saints). Isn't such a belief also present in the Christian doctrine of atonement for sin by *Jesus*? Jesus (Yeshua) also lived in a time similar to that of the Maccabees, under the Romans and Jewish collaborators instead of Greek Seleucids and Hellenist Jews.

Martyrdom in ancient times takes on the same spiritually patriotic aspects found in modern Middle Eastern martyrdom. The Holocaust also can be seen in the same way. It works schematically: Religious individuals or a group are killed for their perceived devotion to a faith or cause—i.e., perceived as innocent, perhaps as "sinless" due to their strong faith. They are killed by an "enemy" group which can often be demonized within the belief system of that faith (examples: good god vs. evil god; Jew vs. gentile; Islam vs. the Great Satan). Such a hard "sacrifice" of a "holy" individual or group is seen to surely be esteemed by the god as an act deserving justice, including the rescue of those remaining in the faith from the "enemy" (whatever that opposing power

may constitute), or the "defeat" of that enemy. And this "sacrifice's" piety is so great that "salvation" will be accomplished in spite of "sins" or deficiencies of others in the faith. In fact, the others are beholden to the victim who has gained attention of the god. The god forgives the people of their sins.

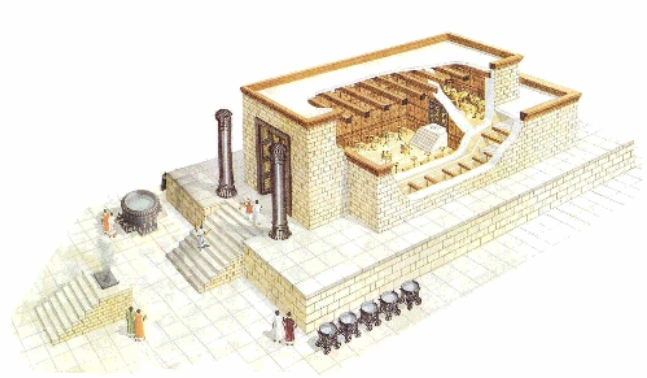
While Yeshua certainly qualifies to be considered a martyr, *sacrificing* his *innocent* life while others sinned, surely moving God to aid his people this is much different than the mythological elevation of Yeshua as a sacrificed god whose blood initiates can "partake" of in order to enter otherworldly mysteries and transcendental salvation. (In truth things got progressively worse.) He didn't die to create the Christian mystery cult as the replacement for the Yahwistic sacrificial system of the Bible. This can only be through a total misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the purpose of biblical sacrifice. The development from Yeshua as martyr to human sacrifice is a defamation of Yeshua, and by no means honorable, much less an exaltation.

Real Atonement

So since "Jesus" cannot be an atonement for your sins, and his martyrdom brought no deliverance to God's people; and there were no sacrifices that put away the sinner's transgressions, then what can we do?

Even if there were sacrificial blood that excused your sins, it seems that Jews would still be sacrificing animals. God's people went through periods of centuries without a Sanctuary (the "Tabernacle") or a Temple. Now it is several thousand years after the gentiles destroyed the Second Temple. Yet we do not sacrifice animals! Amos makes an important point chapter 5:

> [21]I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. [22]Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. [23]Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. [24]But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. [25]Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? (ASV)



In fact, the prophet Hosea sounds as if he knows that sacrificial services and Temple will be interrupted:

> [3:4]For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim: [5]afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to his goodness in the latter days. (ASV)

At several points in the earlier history of the Hebrew people, sacrifices of one sort or another, priestly or individual, were allowed without a Temple. But it ceased. Most Jews today care little about any resumption of sacrifices. In ancient times many Jews lived far from the Temple and probably never participated in Temple rituals, including sacrifice. It doesn't seem to be any real concern, and in fact, is not at all. We know

that even if this article is wrong in promoting the idea that sacrifices were not of a vicarious nature, and if indeed sacrifices could pay for sin, there are still other means of removing sin from our record before God. Most Jews who want to see a third Temple are looking for a national symbol to psychologically "defeat" the gentiles who have sought to destroy us and our Temples. It is not because we want a chance to sacrifice animals.

Why? It is because Jews have never lost the ability to be forgiven by God for their sins. Just as above, according to the words of Isaiah and Jeremiah, we have always known what God really wants for us and from us. We have always had a "system," a means of return to God, with a promise of forgiveness—without any sacrifices or blood necessary in any way. Conversely, it is Christianity which needs and insists on sacrifice and blood (and the blood of one Jew has seemingly never been enough).

[6]Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in; Mine ears hast thou opened: Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Psalm 40:6-7

(Why does the Christian writing Hebrews in 10:5 pervert this with a false quote, saying, "...sacrifice and offering thou does not desire, *but a body you have prepared me*"?)

How does God's People receive "atonement" (wherever I have used this word I am purposely using a Christian word in order to contrast their doctrine with biblical religion)? There are a number of ways.

Torah Justice. By looking at our examples already noted from Isaiah and Jeremiah, it is clear that God wants us to live according to His commandments. His Torah is most identified with ten principles that summarize His code of behavior expected of His People. Some enumerate 613 commandments. The Torah requires us to love our neighbor (fellow Israelite, fellow Yahwist in covenant with God) as ourselves. Some things identified as wrong behavior are punishable while others eat away at a godly society which eventually will not only corrupt and kill God's People but will effect humanity to its detriment. "Israel" is meant to be God's model society for the world. For example, one of the ten principles tells us we must not "covet" the possessions of our neighbor, longing or lusting for them. There is no tit for tat punishment for coveting in the Torah—but there are certainly consequences, even those that include death personally and a state of social corruption.

"We (Jews) have always had a 'system,' a means of return to God, with a promise of forgiveness—without any sacrifices or blood necessary in any way."

Reparation. Many crimes against one's neighbor have specific punishments and requirements of restitution concerning victims. When these crimes are repaired via punishment and/ or restitution, they are "atoned for"—the debt is paid. If you murder someone, your death atones for your bloodshed. If you steal, you must repay more. (What if thieves in this country were

not jailed to be supported by taxes, but instead liquidated or forcibly employed to repay what the Torah demands? We are too far away from biblical society for that.) A preacher who wanted to find fault with God's system asked what happened to those who "got away" with their crimes. Perhaps everyone sins, as Christians say, and not all are punished by man or God, apparently enough—but working sin brings death for everyone (including Jesus), and their death atones.

Repentance. To repent means biblically to cease breaking God's commandments and return to obeying them with a whole heart, recognizing the benefit He has bestowed on mankind through Israel as provided in His covenant commandments. Repentance requires the **confession** (acknowledgement) of sins; and incidentally the confession of sin testifies to a knowledge of Torah and its validity as the standard of righteousness. It saves the individual and the entire people of God.

In Job 33, a sinner…

> [26]… prayeth unto God, and he is favorable unto him, So that he seeth his face with joy: And he restoreth unto man his righteousness. [27]He singeth before men, and saith, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, And it profited me not: [28]He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit, And my life shall behold the light.

Micah 6 says:

> [6]Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? [7]will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? [8]He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? (ASV)

In fact, you will find no mention of the need for sacrifice in order to be forgiven of your sins by God with the prophets Hosea, Micah, Amos, or Isaiah—Isaiah, the book so many Christians desperately search through to find Jesus, their supposed (human) sacrifice. These prophets speak only of repentance to God's commandments given in what us Jews call the Torah.

In the Psalms there are many confessions of sins, and also descriptions of remedy to them. Look at Psalm 51:

> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. [2]Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. [3]For I know my transgressions; And my sin is ever before me. [4]Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, And done that which is evil in thy sight; That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, And be clear when thou judgest. [5]Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me. [6]Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; And in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.
> [7]Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. [8]Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. [9]Hide thy face from my sins, And blot out all mine iniquities. [10]Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a right spirit within me. [11]Cast me not away from thy presence; And take not thy holy Spirit from me. [12]Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; And uphold me with a willing spirit. [13]Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
> [14]Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; *And* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. [15]O Lord, open thou my lips; And my mouth shall show forth thy praise. [16]For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. [17]The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (ASV)

This is a psalm of David who goes on to ask God to build the walls of Jerusalem (in order

to provide for security of worship and also offerings). Sacrifices were superfluous to confession of sin and repentance which calls to God for mercy.

Again, our prophet Isaiah tells us in chapter 55:

> [6]Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: [7]let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. [8]For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. [9]For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"Amen! There is none else but the God of Israel to save us. Jesus cannot save."

Isn't it wonderful that we need not wallow in the blood of animals or men to be at peace with God, purified of sin?

Christians (gentiles) who want to be saved from their evil should perhaps imitate the gentiles of Nineveh to whom God sent Jonah:

> [3:5]And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. [6] And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. [7]And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; [8]but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. [9]Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? [10]And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Even without a Temple or sacrifices far from the holy Land, we have no reason to worry at all if we are repentant and renew our lives in God's commandments. Solomon knew this. And even gentiles can obey God and repent of their sins to be saved from any punishment.

Prayer. Indeed, Solomon foresees future problems of Israel at the inauguration of the Temple he built, the first Temple (1Kings 8):

> [26]Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. [27]But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded! [28]Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day; [29]that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place whereof thou hast said, My name shall be there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place. [30]And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive…. [33]When thy people Israel are smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; if they turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication unto thee in this house: [34]then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers…. [41]Moreover concerning the foreigner, that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for thy name's sake [42](for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy mighty hand, and of thine outstretched arm); when he shall come and pray toward this house; [43]hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by my name. [44]If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatsoever way thou shalt send them, and they pray unto Jehovah toward the city

which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name; [45]then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. [46]If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far off or near; [47]yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have dealt wickedly; [48]if they return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: [49]then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause; [50]and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee; and give them compassion before those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them [51](for they are thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron)…. [57]Jehovah our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us; [58]that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his ordinances, which he commanded our fathers. [59]And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before Jehovah, be nigh unto Jehovah our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel, as every day shall require; [60]that all the peoples of the earth may know that Jehovah, he is God; there is none else.

Amen! There is none else but the God of Israel to save us. Jesus cannot save. Hosea also indicates that prayer will replace sacrificial offerings:

[14:1]O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. [2]Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render *as* bullocks *the offering of* our lips.... [4]I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him (Israel).

The rabbinic Jewish prayer service is literally timed and named according to the ancient sacrifice schedule: šaḥarît (morning/dawn), minḥah (afternoon), arvît (evening), and also musaf (additional).

Tsedaqah. Tsedaqah means "justice" but refers to what many people would call charity (because helping the poor and disenfranchised is a obligatory in biblical religion. Jews today give 10% of their income, the biblical tithe, to the needy—not the rabbi or synagogue.). According to Christian writings (Matt 25:31ff) where he discusses the judgment and a separating of the sheep from the goats we would get the idea that Yeshua required this strongly as well. He concludes, saying:

[40]And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. [41]Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: [42]for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; [43]I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. [44]Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? [45]Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. [46]And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

It is important to remember that Yeshua is saying this to a group of people who believed in him, and perhaps worshipped him as modern Christians do. In John chapter 21, Peter declares that he loves Yeshua three times and each time Yeshua replies, "Feed my sheep." Of course, Yeshua is not God; however, how can you love Yeshua or God if you will not obey their commands, and how just can you be in the next world if you will not be in this one? Yeshua admits that only those who do Torah

will be saved and not those who worship him (Matt 7:21-23 where "iniquity" is *anomia*, "absence of Torah"). And *tsedaqah* is clearly commanded in the Torah of God where we are enjoined to help the poor, fatherless and widows, to give them part of our produce, lend to them without interest or hold what they need in pledge, etc.

So "charity" can serve as a redeeming act. *Tsedaqah* can also be translated "righteousness." Not to confuse anyone, let's look at some verses that talk about taking care of the poor, etc., as specifically mentioned in the context of tsedaqah/ righteousness. Daniel tries to give the king advice to mend his ways before the God of heaven (4:27 English Bibles; 24 in Hebrew).

[27]Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

Again from Jeremiah 7:

[5]For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; [6]if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: [7]then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.

We must insert here that only in later times was their any talk of an afterlife for people being in the heavens with clear allusions to eternal life, or of an afterlife of punishments. The truth is that all such fates in an afterlife are a matter of speculation and these changed as time went on, probably due to foreign influence. Regardless, there's strong belief in an afterlife nowadays and much wrangling of scripture to support it. But before tales of She'ol, Gehinnom, Hades, Tartarus, burning hells or abodes similar to the Elysian Fields, the highest reward found in scripture is Israel's continued blessedness in the Land, being restored to it, long life; or, later in history, resurrection to the Land. Still both the Bible and Christian writings like Matthew affirm the importance of "charity" toward salvation, whatever form that salvation reward takes.

In Summary

- Sacrifices were not for sins of the sinner, but for the defilement as "contagion" contaminating the sacred precincts of the Temple and Tent Sanctuary.
- Sacrifices are unrelated to "salvation."
- God prefers that we live according to His Torah even more than having a Temple or sacrifices.
- Repentance, reparation, prayer, and justice/loving-kindness/charity "atone" for sins.
- There is no need of a human sacrifice/ atonement to be found in Yahwism as expressed in the Tanak.

Cited:
Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*: Anchor Bible, Volume 3. Garden City: 1991. Two other volumes followed in his commentary on Leviticus in this series, published in 2000 (*Leviticus 17-22*), and 2001 (*Leviticus 23-27*).

Graphics Sources:
Page 21- http://eglise.aurelouron.free.fr/Webeglise/imeglise/tabernacle.jpg
Page 29- http://www.pheniciens.com/persos/hiram.htm

Our Liberation

Contents, Issue Six

The High Days are Here! 1

The Ebionite Manifesto 2

Calendar 3

The Holy Days and Jewish Unity 4

Yom Teru`ah 6

Sacrifices: What Covers Your Transgressions? 16